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## **1,500+ Science Center, Museum Leaders Coming to Hartford from around the World**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Hartford, Connecticut is welcoming more than 1,500 leaders of the global science center and museum community, representing 46 countries, during the 2018 Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference, hosted by the Connecticut Science Center September 29 to October 2.

“Our member institutions value the chance to see what’s new in other science centers and museums across the world,” said ASTC President and CEO Cristin Dorgelo. “We’re thrilled to be hosting our annual conference—with a theme this year of ‘Reinvention’—in the state of Connecticut, which is renowned for its historic contributions to invention, science, and technological progress and in the City of Hartford, with its thriving innovation ecosystem. Our host, the Connecticut Science Center, is a model of the myriad ways that science centers and museums contribute to their local economy through providing vital public spaces and educating and preparing the workforce of the future.”

“We’ve been inspired by ASTC member science centers since before we opened our doors in 2009, and we have benefited from this important conference in many other cities,” said Connecticut Science Center President and CEO Matt Fleury, who is also a member of the ASTC Board of Directors and co-chairs its public policy committee. “It’s long been a vision of ours to bring these science education leaders to Connecticut to experience what they inspired us to create and to share our work with them. This is a moment when public engagement in science and the cultivation of a science-aware society is more crucial than ever, so we anticipate a highly energized conference that will resonate among our colleagues here in Connecticut and around the world.”

The ASTC Conference’s activities engage and inspire participants from science centers and museums of all sizes to respond to their communities’ aspirations around science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and to shared societal challenges.

Some highlights of planned events at the Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford Marriott Downtown, Connecticut Science Center, and various local restaurants include:

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- Throughout the conference, more than 150 educational sessions, workshops, and poster presentations on a wide range of topics, including administration and income generation, buildings and operations systems, community engagement and outreach, education and programming, exhibits and environments, fundraising and member relations, future directions for the field, human resources management, immersive media and experiences, leadership, organizational governance, research and evaluation, strategic planning, volunteer engagement, and more.
- The Opening Plenary, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 29, featuring a keynote presentation by Ed Yong, Science Writer at *The Atlantic* magazine, who jumpstarts the conference's thematic examination of ways that individuals and institutions can engage with audiences around STEM topics while also taking action to help solve challenges in society.
- The Alan J. Friedman Science Center Dialogues Luncheon, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 30, exploring ways that science center professionals can better understand themselves—and the communities and people they serve—through the lenses of neuroscience, psychology, medicine, and public health. Featured Speakers include Stephanie Devaney, Deputy Director of the All of Us Research Program at the at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, and Kafui Dzirasa, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University, with discussion facilitated by Moderator Rae Ostman, Associate Research Professor at Arizona State University.
- The ASTC Exhibit Hall, on Saturday and Sunday, September 29 and 30, featuring more than 130 exhibitors sharing the latest advances in science center and museum architecture, educational programs, exhibition design and fabrication, film and video, interactive displays, multimedia, planetariums, playgrounds, robotics, simulators, traveling exhibitions, virtual reality, and much more.
- The General Plenary, from 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Monday, October 1, with a keynote presentation by Kumar Garg, who shares what is on the horizon at the intersection of technology, education, and equity. He is Senior Director for Technology and Society at Schmidt Futures, a venture facility advancing society through technology, inspiring breakthroughs in scientific knowledge, and promoting shared prosperity.
- The Museum Experience Day on Tuesday, October 2, when the Connecticut Science Center hosts behind-the-scenes tours and workshops for its colleagues from around the world, sharing how it runs its operations and plans and delivers the steady parade of new exhibitions and programs for Nutmeg State residents and visitors. Also on Tuesday at the science center, new giant-screen films make up the Big Screen Day film festival, allowing conference participants to see what's new and in the pipeline of educational documentary movies.

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With more than 120 million visitors worldwide each year, science centers and museums are crucial places for informal and lifelong learning, where people can joyfully discover, explore, test, and become immersed in STEM. These community-based institutions serve families, schoolchildren, teachers, homeschoolers, and the general public, playing valuable roles within their communities' educational ecosystems as hubs for learning, exploring, and engaging. Science centers and museums encourage the innate curiosity that resides in everyone, providing opportunities for education, awareness of social and global issues, even recreation.

For more information on the ASTC Annual Conference, visit [www.astc.org/conference](http://www.astc.org/conference).

### About ASTC

Founded in 1973, ASTC now represents nearly 700 organizational members that welcome more than 120 million people each year in more than 50 countries around the world. ASTC members include not only science centers and museums, but also nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organizations that share an interest in informal science education. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC strives to increase awareness of the valuable contributions its members make to their communities and the field of informal STEM learning.

[www.astc.org](http://www.astc.org)

### About Connecticut Science Center

The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving 3-million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store, food concessions and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home to the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: [www.CTScienceCenter.org](http://www.CTScienceCenter.org) or 860.SCIENCE.